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**European Best Practice Award for Coastal Towns: Winners announced**

Strasbourg, 26.04.2012 – President of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly Jean-Claude Mignon and President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities Keith Whitmore announced today the results of the Best Practice Award Programme for European Coastal Towns, at a ceremony during the Parliamentary Assembly session in Strasbourg.

The initiative to reward best local practices for the regeneration of coastal towns was launched by the Council of Europe in January 2012, in the framework of the Chairmanship by the United Kingdom of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers.

The Programme has been carried out by the Council of Europe Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform, in partnership with the Congress, the Parliamentary Assembly and the Local Government Association of the United Kingdom. Its objective is to identify and award local authorities with innovative practices aimed at reversing the downward economic and social trends faced by many coastal communities, and consequently make that knowledge and experience available for sharing with other local authorities.

Based on the evaluation of the 48 applications received, the First Prize was awarded to Yevpatoria (Ukraine), the Joint Second Prize to Bournemouth and Canterbury (both United Kingdom), and the Joint Third Prize to Heroy (Norway) and Zadar (Croatia).

The jury also decided to acknowledge the innovative projects selected for the final round of the competition and nominated for the Best Practice Award. These are:

- Southampton (United Kingdom)
- Great Yarmouth (United Kingdom) (2 nominations)
- East Riding (United Kingdom)
- Heraklion (Greece)
- Murter Kornati (Croatia)
- Aviles (Spain)
- Le Havre (France)
- Odessa (Ukraine)
- Bibinje (Croatia)

In addition, several non-European applications were admitted and evaluated on the same criteria as everyone else. Among those, the project from Ashkelon (Israel) has received as high a score as other nominees in the general competition.

Finally, a Special Certificate is to be given to the only province which submitted an application, the Province of Barcelona in Spain, to encourage innovative practices in support of coastal towns at the provincial and regional level.

These winners and nominees are invited to the Award Ceremony which will take place in Blackpool (United Kingdom) on 9 May 2012.

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